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              Department of Administration

State Agencies Win Project Excellence Awards

HELENA - The second annual State of Montana Information Technology Project Excellence Awards have been presented to state agencies for projects that use technology to meet business needs and improve service. Five projects were recognized by state and industry technology professionals at the Montana Government Information Technology Conference held in Helena in mid-December.

The IT projects were evaluated on the use of best practices, their ability to provide measurable improvements in business or administrative processes and the use of technology to realize savings of time and money.

"These awards are given to projects that demonstrate a wide variety of ways technology helps government agencies accomplish their missions," said Dick Clark, the State's Chief Information Officer. The five award-winning projects are described below.

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) received recognition for the Outdoor Advertising Control project for managing outdoor advertising signage. MDT can now track all sign locations with mobile GPS tracking. Digital identification is also available. Monthly federal reporting has been greatly improved. MDT estimates the cost of updating and completing sign inspections has decreased by 50%. The Department worked with Axiom IT Solutions to complete the project.

By delivering Labor Market Information training using MP3 technology, the Department of Labor and Industry's Workforce Services Division is able to reduce the expense of travel and minimize employee time away from the office. Instead of 3 days in a classroom, the training is now delivered at the time that's best for the staff, with no time away from the office. Because of the new flexibility, more of the 228 employees spread across 24 locations can now participate in the training. The Department developed the solution in-house.

The Voter Verification Project, under the auspices of the Secretary of State's Office, provided a critical resource to citizens of the State of Montana. At http://app.mt.gov/voterinfo/ citizens can type in their name and birth date and receive verification that they are registered as well as the location of their polling place. This service was developed with Montana Interactive LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of eGovernment provider NIC (Nasdaq:EGOV).

The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) and its Game Damage Roster also received an award for excellence. The Game Damage Roster (GDR) project made it possible to implement a new FWP policy pertaining to public sign up and FWP administration of game damage and wildlife management seasons. The GDR involves the hunter through web-based sign up, creates a randomized list in advance for use in setting up game damage hunts or management seasons, and helps FWP avoid last minute scrambling when a damage hunt is essential and hunters are needed on the ground immediately. The roster is available for deer, elk, and antelope by hunting districts. It is opened annually in mid-June and closed in mid-July. See http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/planahunt/damage.html for more information.

The Gambling Suite project, a joint effort of the Department of Justice and Montana Interactive, is an innovative collection of services that provides all the necessary steps for video gambling machine owners and operators to comply with Montana laws. It allows for online submittal of meter reads, quarterly tax payments, permit applications, letters of withdrawal and permit renewal. The services are available at http://app.mt.gov/ gambling.

These award-winning projects are just a sampling of how the State of Montana continues to use information technology to save money and offer improved services to the citizens of Montana.